CHINESE WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY

美國華裔婦女的今昔

A PHOTO DOCUMENTARY
PRESENTED BY

Asian Cultural Exchange

Asian Cultural Exchange

1601 28th Street, Suite A
Sacramento, California 95816
(916) 452-4001

Welcome!

"Chinese Women in American History" is an exhibit presented by the Asian Cultural Exchange in which the poignant story is told through photographs.

The Asian Cultural Exchange is a nonprofit public benefit corporation established to promote an interest and appreciation of the cultures of Asia and Asian America. In developing cross-cultural understanding, we all can increase the quality of our lives. ACE achieves this by being a bridge between the cultures of the East and the West.

Some of the activities being offered will be:

— exhibits of art
— dance & musical performances
— festivals & celebrations
— classes & workshops
— tours & trips
— resource center
— international exchanges

If you enjoyed this photo exhibit, and would like to see more projects of this kind, you may want to become a member of the Asian Cultural Exchange.

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___ Family	24
___ Contributor	50
___ Patron	100
___ Life	300

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Yep

Elizabeth S. Yep
Founding Director

CHINESE WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY — STAFF

Executive Director	Elizabeth Sil-Gúen Yep
Photographic advisor	Lawrence S. K. Lau, Lau & Associates
Creative display	Pam Kinzie, Up Front
Creative consultant	Gayle Stimack
Graphic designer	Earl F. Fong
Calligraphy (Chinese)	Joseph S. Wu, PhD

Special thanks to Judy Yung (Project Director) and Crystal Huie (Photographer) of "Chinese Women of America, 1834-1982," sponsored by the Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco.

Photographs printed by Palmer Photo Lab.

The exhibition staff made this whole show possible. Thank you for offering your time, professional expertise, energy and support.

The Asian Cultural Exchange would like to extend its deepest gratitude to all the generous donors. We hope that you will show your appreciation toward these fine businesses and individuals.

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Executive Office
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(916) 445-6371

February 10, 1984

Asian Cultural Exchange
California Black Cultural Assembly
1601 28th Street, Suite A
Sacramento, California 95816

Attn: Elizabeth Yep

Dear Ms. Yep:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Asian Cultural Exchange and the California Black Cultural Assembly for their efforts toward the success of this impressive exhibit and of National Women's History Week.

These two organizations provide an invaluable service to our community by helping to make all of us more aware of the important contributions made by the women and men of ethnic minorities in this country. Through their efforts we can recognize the barriers faced by minorities in America and begin to take steps to eliminate those barriers.

Please accept my best wishes for a most successful event and for continued success in future endeavors.

Sincerely,

March Fong Eu

MARCH FONG EU
Secretary of State

CITY OF SACRAMENTO

ANNE RUDIN
Mayor
City Hall
915 I Street, Room 205
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 449-5407

February 9, 1984

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure, as the Mayor of the City of Sacramento, to welcome you to the photographic exhibition, "Chinese Women in American History", presented by the Asian Cultural Exchange.

The show is a highlight of the various activities planned for the local celebration of National Women's History Week held March 4 - 10, 1984. The exhibition will appear at the California State Capitol from February 29 to March 15, 1984.

This exhibition exemplifies how American women of other ethnic backgrounds have contributed to the history and growth of our nation. All Sacramentans join me in expressing our congratulations on bringing this fine exhibition to our community.

Sincerely,

Anne Rudin

Anne Rudin
Mayor

AR:cec

INTRODUCTION

Little history has been recorded on the contributions of women and ethnic minorities in America. The story of Chinese American Women is told here. This exhibition traces the historical and cultural forces that shaped the lives and caused the struggles of the Chinese women in the United States. However, these adversities did not deter the Chinese women from accomplishing their achievements.

PART I: PIONEERING WOMEN, 1834 - 1900

1. The "good life" in the Gold Mountain (America) meant a bicycle and a sewing machine.
   Holt-Atherton Pacific Center for Western Studies-UOP
2. Lalu Nathoy was sold in China for two bags of seed, and was later won in a poker game by Charlie Bemis, whom she married. She was known as "China Polly," a generic name.
   Idaho Historical Society
3. In her prime, a well-known prostitute in San Francisco Chinatown during the 1890s.
   Arnold Genthe, Library of Congress
4. No longer attractive, this prostitute hawked her trade for as little as 25¢.
   Pacific Books, Palo Alto, California
5. Donaldina Cameron directing a raid on a Chinese brothel, and giving shelter at the Mission.
   Pacific Books, Palo Alto, California

PART II: THE YEARS OF STRUGGLE, 1900 - 1945

6. On Angel Island, women detainees were segregated from the men in these prison-like barracks.
   National Archives
7. Ming Quong Girls' Home in Oakland, California, provided Westernized education and temporary housing for homeless girls.
   Pauline Chew Collection
8. Hard work was a way of life for this Gold Mountain woman — 15 years in a laundry and 34 years at a cookie factory.
   Helen Hong Wong Collection
9. Chinese American women provided relief to war victims during the Sino-Japanese War.
   Chicago Historical Society

10. Dentist Faith So Leung established a private practice in San Francisco Chinatown in 1905.
Louis Stellman, California State Library

11. Professional entertainer Toy Yat Mar was featured in night clubs in major Chinatowns.
John R. Grau Collection

12. During World War II, many occupations were open to women, such as building "Helldiver bombers."
Detroit News Pictorial, Gertrude Wong Collection

PART III: IN THE MAINSTREAM, 1945 - 1960s

13. Lee Tuey Wan was married at 14 in a "blind marriage" arranged by parents. Separated by immigration restrictions, her Gold Mountain husband visited twice in 19 years. When the family was finally reunited, the children were a generation apart.
Elizabeth Sil-Guen Yep Collection

14. Public schools instilled Western ideas, while Chinese language schools emphasized traditions.
The Washington Post, National Archives

15. Communities became more sexually balanced. Notice the contrast of clothing on the two women.
Dennis K. Yep Collection

16. Dr. Katharine Hsu (pediatrics) established the effectiveness of a drug to prevent tuberculosis. Upon learning the political change in China, she decided to stay in the U.S.
Katharine Hsu Collection

17. The American-born children were quick to adopt American customs.
Elizabeth Sil-Guen Yep Collection

18. Going against her traditional parents, Jade Snow Wong became an author (Fifth Chinese Daughter) and ceramicist.
Jade Snow Wong Collection

19. Growing up in the Deep South, Chinese were considered neither black nor white. Her encounters with prejudice have strengthened her ethnic pride.
Louise Gee Collection

20. March Fong Eu, California Secretary of State, is the highest ranking elected official among Chinese American Women.
California State Archives

婦女之先驅者

PART IV: CONTINUING IMMIGRATION, 1965 - 1980s

21. The overcrowding in Chinatowns worsened with the influx of new immigrants. Ironically, at the same time Chinatowns are ghettos, they are tourist attractions.
    Crystal Huie

22. Immigrant women often worked in non-unionized garment shops, for piece-work wages.
    Peter Man, Kearny Street Worshop

23. Abused for years, growing numbers of workers are now demanding their rights.
    Corky Lee

24. The media field has made Asians more visible and has been an effective voice on pertinent issues.
    Christine Choy, Third World Newsreel

PART I: PIONEERING WOMEN, 1834 - 1900

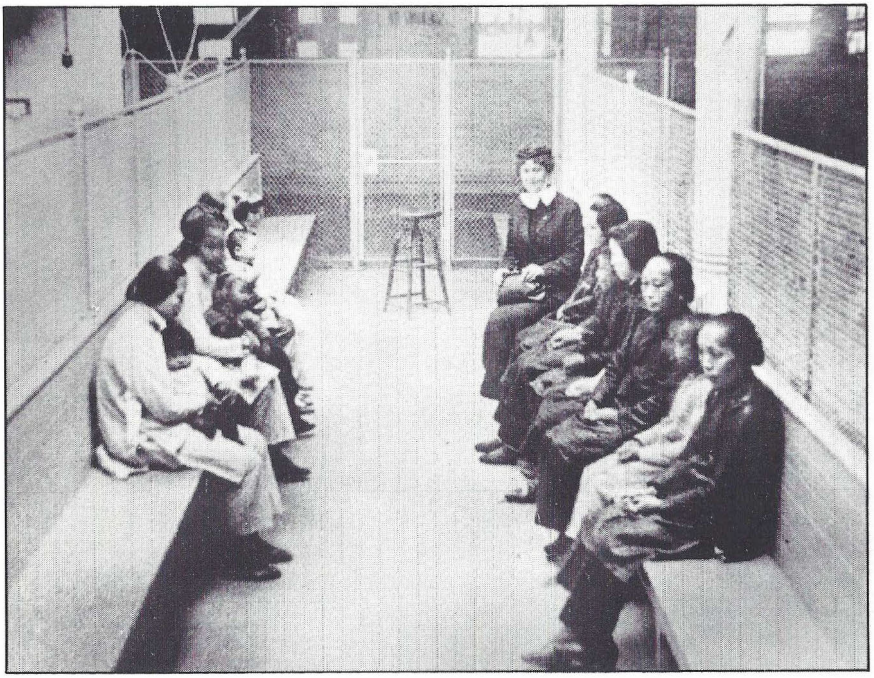
Early Chinese American women were few in number but memorable for their resilience. The women who braved the arduous voyage across the Pacific Ocean to settle in the male-dominated Chinatowns or remote rural areas in America were true pioneers. In facing and surviving an alien and often hostile environment, they blazed a trail for Chinese women who followed.

Idaho State Historical Society

奮鬥歲月

PART II: YEARS OF STRUGGLE, 1900 - 1945

Leaving their homeland torn by internal upheavals and foreign aggression, Chinese immigrants put down roots in America. However, economic hard times in the new land resulted in discriminatory laws specifically against the Chinese. In 1924, Congress passed a law preventing Chinese women to enter as wives of Chinese Americans, thus perpetuating the bachelor society. During the period of exclusion, all Chinese immigrants were detained to await interrogation on Angel Island, in the San Francisco Bay. Once allowed into the country, women immigrants faced years of hardship, especially during the Great Depression.



National Archives

轉折點

PART III: IN THE MAINSTREAM, 1945 - 1960s

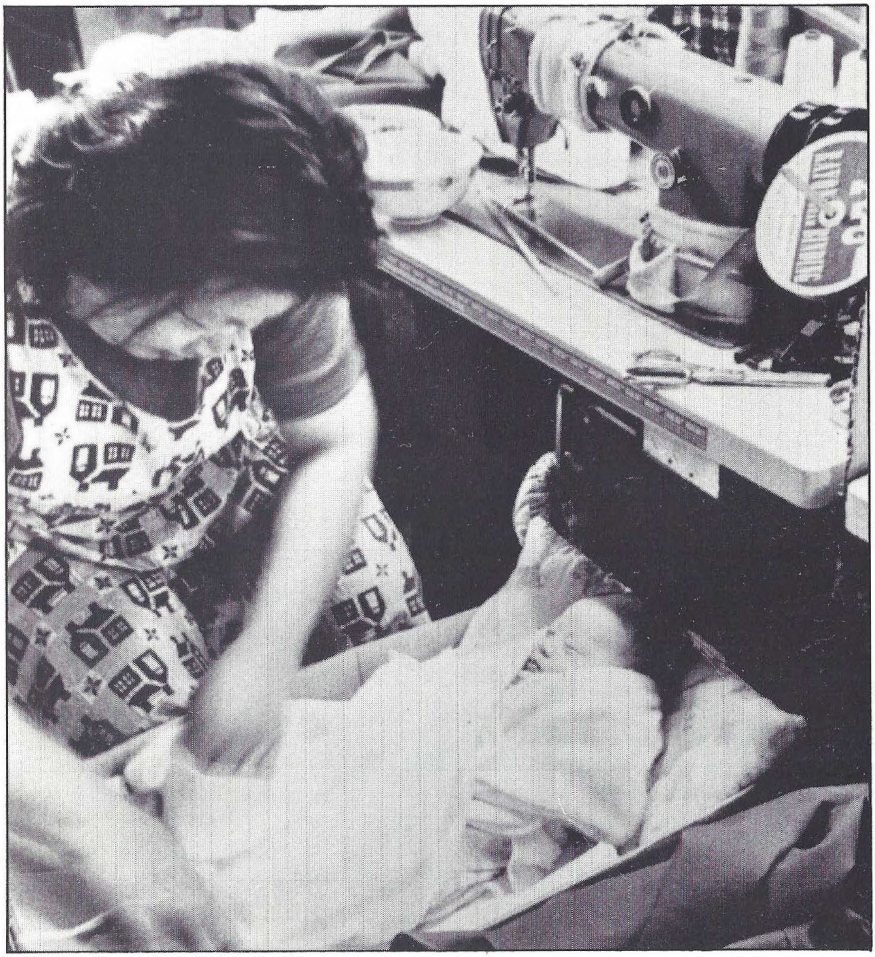
During a very brief period, a favorable attitude in America toward China and Chinese Americans existed. Anti-Chinese laws were revoked one by one. The repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act now allowed China a token quota of 105. Then, under the War Brides Act of 1945 and the G.I. Fiancees Act of 1946, Chinese American servicemen were allowed to bring their wives and children as non-quota immigrants. The communities became more sexually balanced and family-oriented. American-born Chinese women of the postwar period were, on the whole, beginning to widen their career choices, and finally attaining an improved socio-economic status. Girls from the Baby Boom had to contend with not only a generation gap, but also a cultural gap. They faced a loss of ethnic identity in the process of acculturation.

Dennis K. Yep Collection

新近移民的回顧與前瞻

PART IV: CONTINUING IMMIGRATION, 1965 - 1980s

1965 saw the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and China's annual quota was expanded to 20,000. Added to that number are non-quota immigrants, such as refugees and foreign students from throughout Southeast Asia. These recent immigrants tend to settle in already overcrowded Chinatowns, thus compounding the ghetto problems. The immediate concern is not self-fulfillment but survival, and the mothers hope of a brighter future for their children in the next generation. The cycle repeats itself.



Peter Man, Kearny Street Workshop

EPILOGUE

In the 150 years since the arrival of the first Chinese women in America, the role of the Chinese American woman has changed dramatically — from that of the obscure "China Polly" (generic name) to that of the Americanized achiever. Concurrently immigrant women continue to arrive every day, repeating the adjustment cycle within new contexts. As Chinese American women look forward to the 1980s, not only do they face the challenges of being a woman, but they must also deal with the issue of being an ethnic minority. To improve their community, many Chinese American women are broadening their concept of ethnic identity by seeing themselves as Asian Americans. Consequently, all events that occur in their community have a ripple effect that in turn affects the mainstream society at large.

READING LIST

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Yep, Laurence, CHILD OF THE OWL, (Harper and Row, 1977; Dell, 1978).

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Chinese Buffet

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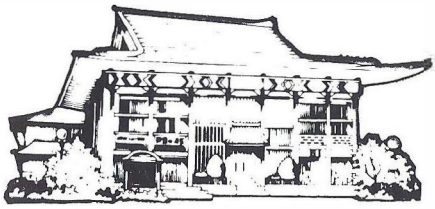

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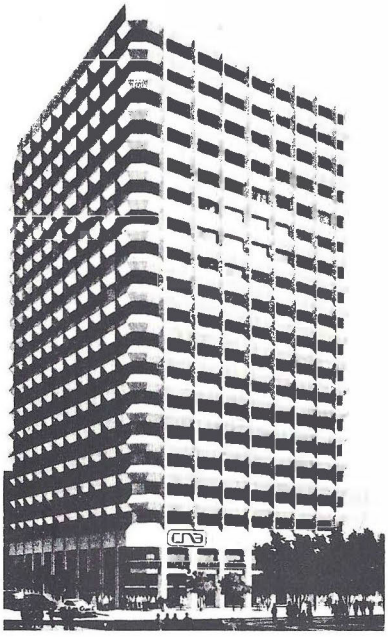

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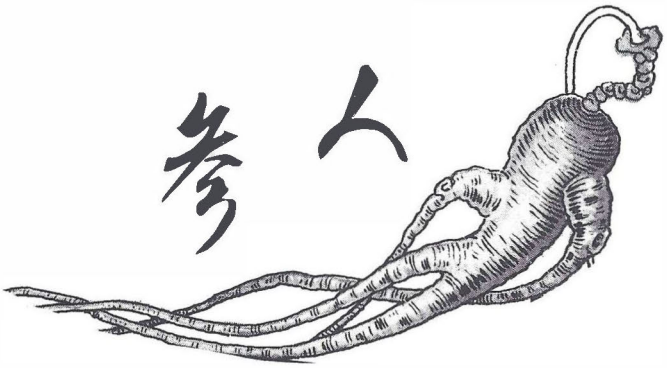

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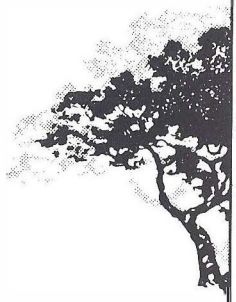
smile / 'smīl/ n **1:** a change of facial expression in which the eyes brighten and the corners of the mouth curve slightly upward and which express amusement, pleasure, approval or happiness **2:** a pleasant or encouraging appearance.



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